

## STORY 28.

## HOW MUSLIMS TREATED THEIR SLAVES.

In the Islamic society of the time of the Prophet there was only a nominal distinction between a master and his slave who was treated in every respect as a member of the family.

1. (Hazrat) Omar was the commander of the faithful and he was the man who had conquered the two most powerful Empires of the world. But owing to the teachings of Islam such was his sense of the essential equality between man and man that once when (Hazrat) Safwan bin Omayya presented him with a tray full of articles of food (Hazrat) Omar called slaves and beggars, and partook of the food in their company and remarked that those people were certainly under God's curse who felt it beneath their dignity to eat from the same dish with a slave. It was thus that he humbled the inborn pride of the haughty Arabs and taught them lessons of equality.

2. Once (Hazrat) Obayy son of Kaab who occupied a high position among the companions of the Prophet rose to depart from a gathering. Some of those who were present followed him, but kept at a respectful distance behind him. By chance (Hazrat) Omar came that way, and seeing this, struck (Hazrat) Obayy with the whip which he always carried with him. In surprise (Hazrat) Obayy asked the reason of this affront. Upon this

(Hazrat) Omar said "Don't you see, this is humiliation for those who follow, and a temptation for the one who is followed. In the one case it destroys self-respect, which is the essence of Manliness, and in the other engenders vanity."